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SUBJECT: Disgruntled Former Employee Alleges Damaged
Perimeter Fencing Compromises Airport Security; Improvements
Ongoing

1. Summary: In a written complaint submitted to Post, Fabio Carias, a former airport supervisor, alleged that the perimeter fences at the international airports in San Pedro Sula, La Ceiba, and Roatan are in severe disrepair, compromising the security of the airports by leaving them vulnerable to infiltration and trespassing. Carias claimed that he repeatedly brought these security vulnerabilities to the attention of senior officials at airport management concessionaire Interairports, but that they ignored his reports and eventually had him fired. Carias also warned that the U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) had not held Interairports accountable for the security problems. Post brought the complaint to the attention of Honduran civil aviation authorities, the manager of Interairports, and TSA representatives. End summary.

2. For more than two years, Fabio Carias worked in the office of the Superintendent of Concessions and Licenses at Honduran airport concessionaire Interairports, as a supervisor of the ongoing construction at the three international airports in northern Honduras. In a written complaint submitted to Post on September 23, Carias alleges that the security fences surrounding the three airports, and particularly the airport in San Pedro Sula, have been overgrown by vegetation and damaged by trespassers, leaving the airports vulnerable to infiltration. Carias says that he repeatedly brought the security lapses to the attention of his supervisor, Miriam Yasmina Deras, and Interairports manager Elida Howell, but that his reports were ignored. Furthermore, he claims that Deras and Howell colluded in having him dismissed from his position this past summer.

3. Carias attributes some of the responsibility for the security lapses to the TSA, alleging that TSA officials who inspected the airports were not shown damaged sections of the perimeter fences, as Interairports officials sought to impress them by showing off only new and repaired fencing. Carias also claims that when TSA made recommendations for security improvements to the fencing, they did not follow up to ensure Interairports' compliance. According to Carias, the airports continue to be vulnerable to intrusion and unlawful activities by gang members, among others.

4. TSA representatives visiting Honduras the week of October 10 met with Econoff to review Carias' complaint. According to the TSA representative, Interairports and the GOH are aware of potential security problems, and are working to fix them. TSA has directly addressed deficiencies and inadequacies in airport perimeter fencing with Honduran civil aviation authorities during previous inspection visits. (During a TSA visit in July 2005, Econoff accompanied a TSA representative to a meeting with civil aviation authorities in which damaged fencing was a topic of discussion.) TSA is also in regular contact with the GOH National Aviation Security Manager regarding airport security and necessary improvements to the security systems. TSA's recommendations for improved airport security include

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construction of secondary perimeter fencing, increased security patrols, and installation of closed circuit cameras. TSA continues to follow up, and will investigate further as warranted.

5. Econoff also spoke with Elida Howell, the Interairports manager, regarding the question of damaged perimeter fencing. Howell says that airport fencing has been repaired and the most heavily damaged sections are being replaced. The airports have also implemented more frequent foot patrols, which have succeeded in capturing potential intruders. Howell agrees with TSA that a CCTV system would be most useful for monitoring distant sections of the fence, but she says that because of lack of funds, the proposed system will not be in place until March 2006.

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